



## PRESS STATEMENT

### **Apia, 17 March 2022 –Ombudsman holds community consultations on the impacts of COVID-19 on rights and freedoms for its Status of Human Rights Report 2022**

Mandated under s40 of the Ombudsman Act 2013, the Ombudsman is to report to Parliament every year in June on the status of human rights in Samoa. The report contains recommendations informed by submissions from members of the public and various groups and organisations including Government about reforms and other measures to prevent or redress any human rights issues arising to ensure the continuous promotion and protection of rights and freedoms of all Samoan citizens.

The Report for 2022 will focus on *COVID-19 and the impact on human rights – the case of Samoa*. The focus of the report on COVID-19 is not only as a result of the issue being one of great relevance and significance, but also because the Office has received several complaints and submissions from individuals and members of the public regarding the impact of COVID-19 on rights and freedoms.

To inform its analysis and recommendations, the Office held community consultations on the 15 and 17 March 2022. The community consultations covered the districts of Fa'asaleleaga No 1 in Savaii, and Lefaga and Falease'ela in Upolu. Views from these consultations will be in addition to feedback from the business community, civil society, government, children and individuals who have been or will be consulted on the matter.

Call for submissions opened in September 2021 and will close end of March 2022. Individuals, business owners, civil society, Government Ministries and anyone who may want to voice their views and concerns regarding the issue can still have their say by filling out the Office Questionnaire found on our website: <https://ombudsman.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Questionnaire-COVID-19-and-human-rights-final-PDF.pdf>



Participants – Lefaga & Faleaseela



Participants – Faasaleleaga No. 1

**ENDS.**